

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

NOTE: It is important that you read the accompanying *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document before completing this form.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD MM YY

Designation date

Site Reference Number

1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

May 2002

2. Country:

Denmark (Greenland)

3. Name of wetland:

Kitsissut Avalliit (Ydre Kitsissut)

International No. 388

National No. 8

4. Geographical coordinates:

60°45'N, 48° 25'W

5. Altitude: (min. & max.) 0-116 m

6. Area: 4.470 hectares

7. Overview:

 (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

Terrestrial/marine habitat area: 4/96%

A group of rocky islands and skerries situated appr. 10 km off the mainland coast in south western Greenland. High diversity of breeding seabirds.

8. Wetland Type

 (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Annex I of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document.)

marine-coastal: A ! B ! C ! D ! E ! F ! G ! H ! I ! J ! K

inland: L ! M ! N ! O ! P ! Q ! R ! Sp ! Ss ! Tp ! Ts

!U ! Va ! Vt ! W ! Xf ! Xp ! Y ! Zg !Zk

man made: 1 ! 2 ! 3 ! 4 ! 5 ! 6 ! 7 ! 8 ! 9

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant:

9. Ramsar Criteria: (please circle the applicable criteria; see point 12 below)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site:

4

10. Map of site included? Please tick *yes* -or- *no*

(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

As print and Word file on CD-rom.

11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page.

(Please refer to Annex II in the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document).

1. For the extensive archipelago far from the mainland
3. The site holds a high diversity of breeding seabirds.
4. For the diversity of breeding waterbirds

13. General location: (include the nearest large town and its administrative region)

A group of rocky island situated appr. 10 km off the mainland coast in southwestern Greenland. Closest settlements are the villages of Ivittut and Arsuk. Within the Municipality of Qaqortoq.

14. Physical features: (e.g. geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth. Water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)

The site consists of two main islands, Tupersuartut and Thorstien Islænder, and a large number of smaller islands and skerries. Most of the islands are wind exposed and almost bare rock with only small patches of vegetation". A group of rocky islands and skerries c. 10 km from main shoreline (Egevang & Boertmann 2001).

15. Hydrological values: (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc)

No information available.

16. Ecological features: (main habitats and vegetation types)

In the sheltered areas it is possible to find vegetation like grasses, willow (*Salix ssp*), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) –otherwise rare in Greenland. On Tupersuartut rose root (*Sedum rosea*) is found and in some of the seabird colonies scurvy grass (*Cochlearia officinalis*) is common (Egevang & Boertmann 2001).

17. Noteworthy flora: (indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc)

In the sheltered areas it is possible to find vegetation with grasses, willow (*Salix* spp.), crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum*) and cloudberry (*Rubus chamaemorus*) - otherwise rare in Greenland (Egevang & Boertmann 2001).

18. Noteworthy fauna: (indicating, e.g., which species are unique, rare, endangered, abundant or biogeographically important; include count data, etc.)

The site holds one of the most diverse seabird breeding colonies in Greenland including an important colony of Brünnich guillemots (*Uria lomvia*) (5,450 ind. in 1999, 9,000 indiv. in 1992) in South Greenland. The largest breeding colony of Common guillemots (*U. aalge*) (550 indiv. in 1999, 900 indiv. in 1992) in Greenland is located at this site.

Earlier Ramsar reports (1990, 1993 and 1996) mention Little auk (*Alle alle*) as a breeder in this site. This is not correct and may be due to confusion with another Kitsissut close to Nanortalik, South Greenland, where this species breeds.

19. Social and cultural values: (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site etc.)

None

20. Land tenure/ownership of: (a) site (b) surrounding area
a and b: Territorial ownership. No privately owned land.

21. Current land use: (a) site (b) surroundings/catchment
a and b: None

22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:

(a) and (b) past:

There has neither been any human induced changes` adversely affecting the physical structure of the site nor of the surroundings of the site. So the ecological potential of the site is expected to be preserved. Changes in the composition of the bird species using the site, might have been caused by factors affecting the birds in the whole of their distribution areas. It is known that the Greenlandic breeding population of Brünnich's guillemots has declined drastically during the last 30-40 years. This trend has also affected the breeding population in this site. The numbers of guillemots (both species) has declined with appr. 37% over a 7-year period in the site. Observers have found several traces after human visitors in the islands indicating that eggng takes place in spite of a ban on eggng and disturbances in the breeding season.

(a) and (b) present:

The same as in the past. Eggng and disturbance is a major threat to the breeding bird population and particularly the guillemots.

(a) and (b) potential:

There are no planned activities, which will change the physical structure of the site or the surroundings of the site. Any future activities will be regulated. See point 23 and 24.

23. Conservation measures taken: (national category and legal status of protected areas - including any boundary changes which have been made: management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

The area is breeding bird reserve where sailing and activities on-shore is prohibited in the main breeding season from 1 May to 31 August, and it is prohibited to come closer than 500 meters (Egevang & Boertmann 2001, Anonymous 2001).

The seabird colonies (Brünnich's guillemot)* are included in the "Areas important to wildlife" by

the Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum". In general the regulation apply only to activities in relation to mineral exploration. Fixed-wing aircrafts flying more than 500 m above the ground is not regulated.

*In an area within 5 km from the colony, activities (except navigating) need approval in the period 1 June – 15 Sept. Staying in the colony is not permitted (Egevang & Boertmann 2001, Anonymous 2000).

No management plans exists.

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: (e.g. management plans in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area etc.)

No management plan in preparation. However, within a 2-4 year time frame specific conservation measures of this Ramsar area could be expected following a new Nature protection act planned to enter into force in 2002. The National Environmental Research Institute (NERI) recommends that a monitoring programme is urgently needed with a 3-5 years interval at this site. In addition, NERI concludes that there is a high demand of management at the site due to the potential conflict with human activities that is assessed to be at a medium level (Egevang & Boertmann 2001).

25. Current scientific research and facilities: (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc.)

NERI has in 2001 published a status report for this an all other Ramsar areas in Greenland.

26. Current conservation education: (e.g. visitors centre, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc.)

None.

27. Current recreation and tourism: (state if wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type and frequency/intensity)

No tourism.

28. Jurisdiction: (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment etc.)

The Greenland Home Rule Government. Ministry of Environment and Nature.

29. Management authority: (name and address of local body directly responsible for managing the wetland)

Ministry of Environment and Nature, Greenland Home Rule Government, P.O. Box 1614, DK-3900 Nuuk, Greenland. Ph.: + 299 34 67 01, fax + 299 32 52 86

30. Bibliographical references: (scientific/technical only)

Danish Report 1996 on the Ramsar Convention, Denmark and Greenland.

Ministry of Environment and Energy, The National Forest and Nature Agency
Ramsar Areas in Greenland.

Department of Environment and Nature, Greenland. Unpublished report 1998.

Anonymous 2000. Rules for fieldwork and reporting regarding mineral resources (excluding hydrocarbons) in Greenland. Government of Greenland, Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum.

Anonymous 2001. Hjemmestyrets bekendtgørelse nr. 38 af 6. december 2001 om beskyttelse af Fugle. Grønlands Hjemmestyre.

Egevang, C. & Boertmann, D. 2001. The Greenland Ramsar Sites, a status report. - National Environmental Research Institute (NERI), Denmark. NERI Technical Report No. 346, 96 pp.

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